

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 NEW DE 04591 312058Z  
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15  
USIA-06 TRSY-02 /058 W  
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R 311330Z MAR 77  
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2299

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 4591

FOLLOWING SEND ACTION NEW DELHI INFO BOMBAY AND MADRAS FROM  
CALCUTTA MARCH 30, 1977 REPEATED FOR YOU

QUOTE  
CALCUTTA 0775

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINT, IN  
SUBJ: ORISSA AND BIHAR AFTER THE ELECTIONS

1. IN ORISSA AND BIHAR, AS IN WEST BENGAL, CONGRESS GOVERNMENTS ARE UNDER ATTACK AS A RESULT OF THEIR DEFEATS IN THE LOK SABHA ELECTIONS (CONGRESS DID NOT WIN ANY SEATS IN BIHAR AND ONLY 4 OF 21 IN ORISSA). JANATA AND CFD LEADERS HOPE TO BRING DOWN THE CONGRESS CABINETS. BUT IN BOTH STATES CONGRESS HAS A COMFORTABLE MAJORITY IN THE STATE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY. WHILE THE TWO STATE GOVERNMENTS COULD SHIFT FROM CONGRESS TO JANATA/CFD CONTROL IN THE MONTHS AHEAD, THIS IS BY NO MEANS ASSURED. A LOT WILL DEPEND ON HOW MUCH PRESSURE THE NEW GOI WANTS TO BRING TO BEAR IN THE TWO STATES.

2. THE CONGRESS GOVERNMENT IN ORISSA IS PROBABLY MORE VULNERABLE THAN ITS COUNTERPART IN BIHAR. BEFORE THE LOK SABHA ELECTIONS THE ORISSA CONGRESS HAD 89 SEATS IN THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY AND THE JANATA 43; THE CFD HAD ONLY ONE (MRS. SATPATHY) WHILE OTHERS WERE CPI 7, CPM 2, JHARKHAND 3 AND INDEPENDENTS 3. THUS JANATA/CFD WOULD NEED AT LEAST TWENTY DEFECTIONS FROM CONGRESS RANKS TO BRING DOWN THE CONGRESS GOVERNMENT. THIS IS CERTAINLY IN THE REALM OF POSSIBILITY IN A STATE LIKE ORISSA WHERE POLITICAL BARGAINING AND CROSSING OF THE AISLES IS COMMONPLACE. DEFECTIONS FROM

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TIVE ASSEMBLY AND THE JANATA 43; THE CFD HAD ONLY ONE (MRS. SATPATHY) WHILE OTHERS WERE CPI 7, CPM 2, JHARKHAND 3 AND INDEPENDENTS 3. THUS JANATA/CFD WOULD NEED AT LEAST TWENTY DEFECTIONS FROM CONGRESS RANKS TO BRING DOWN THE CONGRESS GOVERNMENT. THIS IS CERTAINLY IN THE REALM OF POSSIBILITY IN A STATE LIKE ORISSA WHERE POLITICAL BARGAINING AND CROSSING OF THE AISLES IS COMMONPLACE. DEFECTIONS FROM

THE ORISSA CONGRESSES SEEM ALL THE MORE LIKELY IN THAT THE PRESENT CABINET WAS PUT TOGETHER BY SANJAY GANDHI IN DECEMBER OF LAST YEAR. WITH SANJAY'S REMOVAL FROM THE SCENE AND THE DEFEAT IN THE LOK SABHA ELECTIONS OF SANJAY'S HENCHMAN FORMER UNION DEFENSE MINISTER OF STATE J.B. PATNAIK, THE ORISSA CONGRESS IS PRACTICALLY LEADERLESS.

3. IF ORISSA JANATA LEADER BIJU PATNAIK HAD NOT JOINED THE GOI CABINET, HE COULD ALMOST CERTAINLY HAVE COUNTED ON BEING THE STATE'S NEXT CHIEF MINISTER. HIS REMOVAL TO THE CENTER LEAVES FORMER CONGRESS CHIEF MINISTER NANDINI SATPATHY, NOW CFD, IN THE RUNNING FOR THE CHIEF MINISTER'S JOB. BUT MRS. SATPATHY IS NOT POPULAR WITH JANATA LEADERS IN ORISSA; MANY OF THEM SUFFERED UNDER HER RULE DURING THE EMERGENCY, AND WE ARE TOLD THAT JANATA CANDIDATES REFUSED TO CAMPAIGN WITH HER DURING THE LOK SABHA ELECTIONS. IT SEEMS UNLIKELY THAT BIJU PATNAIK WOULD WANT MRS. SATPATHY BACK IN OFFICE. WE ARE TOLD THAT HE WOULD PREFER TO RUN ORISSA THROUGH ONE OF HIS TRUSTED FOLLOWERS, SOMEONE LIKE FORMER DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER NILMONI RAUTRAY. BARRING THIS, SPECULATION IS THAT PATNAIK MIGHT PREFER TO LEAVE THE ORISSA GOVERNMENT IN THE HANDS OF THE CURRENT CONGRESS CABINET.

4. VIOLENCE HARDLY SEEMS LIKELY OR NECESSARY AS A MEANS OF BRINGING ABOUT A CHANGE IN THE STATE GOVERNMENT IN ORISSA. NOT SO IN BIHAR. CONGRESS IS MUCH STRONGER IN THE BIHAR LEGISLATURE. THERE HAVE BEEN SOME 20 DEFECTIONS FROM CONGRESS TO THE CFD SINCE FEBRUARY BUT CONGRESS STILL HOLDS CONFIDENTIAL

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187 SEATS IN THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY AND ALL THE OTHER PARTIES COMBINED HAVE ONLY 75 (THIS INCLUDES 24 FOR CFD AND 32 FOR CPI). OF COURSE THE CONGRESS ORGANIZATION IN BIHAR HAS BEEN SEVERELY SHAKEN BY ITS HUMILIATING FAILURE IN THE LOK SABHA ELECTIONS, BUT DEFECTIONS OF THE MAGNITUDE THAT WOULD BE REQUIRED TO BRING DOWN THE CONGRESS GOVERNMENT SEEM UNLIKELY. FROM WHAT WE HEAR FROM BIHAR, JANATA AND CFD LEADERS AND THEIR TROOPS ARE EAGER FOR DISSOLUTION OF THE STATE ASSEMBLY AND ELECTIONS. EARLY REVOCATION OF THE 42ND AMENDMENT WOULD BE THE ANSWER, FOR IT WOULD BRING THE BIHAR LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY'S TERM BACK TO FIVE YEARS, WHICH HAS ALREADY ELAPSED. BUT BARRING THIS, THE ONLY WAY TO BRING ABOUT ELECTIONS IN BIHAR WOULD SEEM TO BE FOR JANATA AND CFD TO RESORT TO DEMONSTRATIONS AND VIOLENCE ON A SCALE SUFFICIENT TO GIVE THE CENTER JUSTIFICATION FOR INSTITUTING PRESIDENT'S RULE AND DISSOLVING THE ASSEMBLY. A RECENT VISITOR FROM PATNA TELLS US THERE IS UNCERTAINTY THERE OVER WHAT JANATA AND CFD WILL DO; SOME THINK THAT THE NEW GOI MAY FEEL IT FACES ENOUGH PROBLEMS KEEPING ITS COALITION

TOGETHER AT THE CENTER AND WILL HESITATE TO CREATE MORE BY  
SANCTIONING VIOLENCE IN BIHAR.

5. SPECULATION IS THAT IF THERE ARE ELECTIONS IN BIHAR  
LATER THIS YEAR THE CFD MAY EMERGE AS A MAJOR FORCE - PER-  
HPAE THE MAJOR FORCE - IN THE STATE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.  
WE ARE TOLD THAT IN STATE ELECTIONS THE CFD COULD COUNT  
ON GETTING A LARGE PART OF THE VOTE THAT IN THE PAST HAS  
GONE TO CONGRESS. MANY IN PATNA CONSIDER IT A POSSIBILITY  
THAT THE NEXT STATE CABINET MIGHT BE HEADED BY THE CFD.  
SIGNED KORN  
UNQUOTE  
SCHNEIDER

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## Message Attributes

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